THE PORT FOLIO,

(NEW SERIES)

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, ESQ.

Various, that the mind of desultory man, studious of change and pleased with novelty, may be indulged—Cowp.

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ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For The Port Folio.

TRAVELS.

LETTERS FROM GENEVA AND FRANCE.

Written during a residence of between two and three years in different parts of those countries, and addressed to a lady in Virginia.

(*Continued from page* 84.)

LETTER XXXVI.

My Dear E.

THE life we have led here during the summer has been rather a happy than a gay one; we have had company now and then, we have made several excursions into the neighbouring country. Your uncle surprized us very agreeably with a visit; ——— and ——— have come regularly once a week to pass a day with us. N. has been attended by the same masters as in town, and another sister has added herself to our society: but before I say anything to you of our excursions, I must carry you back to Geneva, and bring you acquainted with some of the persons whom I saw there last winter. It is, perhaps, the principal advantage arising from a residence in large towns, that we are able to intermix in society with those from whose conversation we derive amusement or instruction, in a sort of momentary acquaintance—it is agreeable to find ourselves in the same circle with a person who has lately navigated the Euxine, or who is just from Moscow, or who has served in Egypt, or who has distinguished himself in the literary world, or by some useful improvement in the arts, and to return home late in the evening, as from a play, where we have seen a number of interesting characters taken from life, and well represented: it is agreeable also to compare the countenance and appearance of those who have acted a part in the great political theatre of the world, with the opinion we had conceived of them from their actions and general conduct—to see

the face of one who has ridden in the great whirlwind, and directed, for a time, the storm. I confess to you, that in writing the last sentence, I had principally in my mind, the celebrated Mr. Necker, who had, for two or three years past, resided in Geneva, during the winter, and whose acquaintance I was, in some measure, able to cultivate. Mr. Necker was the son of respectable parents, who, by giving him a good education, and early habits of industry, gave him what was better than fortune. His established reputation as a man of talents, his great success as a banker, his good name and extensive credit recommended him to the notice of the French government, as likely to assist in restoring some order to their miserably mismanaged finances, ('76). The effect of his first operations, in simplifying, and consequently rendering less expensive, the collection of the publick revenue, was soon evident, and universally applauded; but when he had prevailed upon the King to suspend to the end of every year, the distribution of pecuniary gratifications, without binding himself in the interval by any promise, and had destroyed a labyrinth of abuses, all arising, in the first instance, from the good nature of the unfortunate monarch, who knew not how to reject or to refuse his merit, was soon attacked, and his conduct vilified by a whole host of foes, among whom were some of the most exalted personages of the kingdom: it was in vain that he had found funds for carrying on the war occasioned by the independence of America, without the imposition of new taxes; that he had found means to establish, at the most difficult of all periods, that credit which his predecessours in office had not been able to preserve in time of peace, and that he could announce to the King, and to the nation, that the ordinary revenues of the state exceeded the ordinary expenses by the sum of 10,002000 livres, which would have paid the interest of a loan of 200,000000: some denied his assertions, others attacked his conduct on the score of vanity and indiscretion, and such numbers assailed him, in different ways, that unmindful of that inestimable consciousness of having done well, which he may be so easily supposed to have possessed, inattentive to the high and important duties of his station, he pertinaciously insisted upon what the King had been previously prevailed upon to believe, could not with propriety be granted, and threw up his place —an event which he must ever after have sincerely regretted, for, he must have since been sensible, that it contributed, more than any other circumstance, to bring about those evils, under which the monarchy was finally overwhelmed. In addition to those enemies, whom every man of merit in place unavoidably creates, at court, the grave and silent demeanour of Mr. Necker, his unattractive civility, his strongly manifested determination of depending upon himself alone, created others, and his very disinterestedness, in not accepting the emoluments of his office, was displeasing. I can very well imagine that he felt himself rich enough to overlook the advantage of three or four thousands a-year, added to his income, and that he gratified an honourable pride in serving the publick without pay; but his appointments, which were but a trifle to the means of the nation, might have been made subservient to some purpose of publick utility, or

private charity, and he ought to have avoided driving those who surrounded him to any mortifying comparisons. After three years of privacy and retirement, he again attracted the attention of the publick, by defending his former exposition of the finances, which had lately been attacked, and having given the government some pretext to affect displeasure, from the nature of his arguments, or the expressions he made use of, he was ordered to quit the kingdom. You may now turn to Johnson's noble imitation of Juvenal's tenth Satire, and will agree with me, that it would have been better, perhaps, for Mr. Necker himself, for his family, for his fame and fortune, for France, and for all Europe, had he never returned to court. I say *perhaps*, meaning, in the full force of the word, to acknowledge my incompetency to judge, and mindful of that sort of predestination, according to which the great and important affairs of the world move along, as the heavenly bodies do in their orbits. M. de Calonne, who was a man of genius, is to be distinguished from the general censure passed upon those ministers, who rapidly succeeded Mr. Necker, but *their* administration of the finances exhibited, but too generally, a succession of weak measures and rash expedients: the exile of the parliament of Paris, at the same time, the imprisonment of several respectable and popular individuals, the establishment of the *Cour Plenière*, by which the last appearance of anything like independence, in any branch of the government, was destroyed, were all so many steps towards that general confusion which all men looked forward to, some with dread, some with indifference, but the greater number with exultation: the finances of the kingdom, meanwhile, were extremely embarrassed, publick credit was at an end, the laws were without effect, the police without energy, and the army in a state of dangerously relaxed discipline; the wrath of heaven indeed seemed poured forth upon this wretched country; for, in addition to all the evils I have mentioned, the harvests, to a great extent about Paris, had been destroyed; they were much less favourable than usual, over the whole kingdom, and bread had risen to an enormous price: rumours too, of political changes, to be effected by the promised assembling of the States General, had gone abroad, ideas of liberty, derived from England and America, were every day becoming more and more familiar to the publick mind, people of all ranks and degrees of information were dissatisfied, and symptoms, which may be compared to those hollow sounds, and to that lowering sky, which precede an earthquake in the W. Indies were every-where apparent: no expedient now offered itself to the King and those about him but the recall of Mr. Necker, whose presence did indeed operate wonders—this must have been a proud moment of his life: the courts of justice soon reassumed their customary authority, the police its vigilance, and the army its former habits of discipline and good order, whilst provisions flowed in from all parts of the world. What was as singular too as any other circumstance, and upon which indeed all depended, was, that the treasury seemed replenished, as if by miracle, and the obligations of the government were fulfilled with honour and punctuality. But still the King had given his word, the nation was not to be tri-

fled with: the assembling of the States General seemed inevitable, and it was necessary they should be preceded by an assembly of the notables. You will see an account of all that followed in any history of the revolution, and how the noblesse and the parliaments seemed to provoke their fate. It is to be presumed that Mr. Necker could not have prevented the meeting of the States General; but he might have prevented their being convened at Paris; from that circumstance, and from the still more fatal oversight of permitting galleries to be erected for the accommodation of the publick, who were allowed to be present, at the debates, and to express their opinion by marks of applause or disapprobation, flowed the greater part of those evils, which afterwards ensued. Of the double representation of the *tiers état*, he was, undoubtedly, not the authour, but he too readily consented, that the individuals of the three orders should vote, as members of one General Assembly, and he was, unquestionably wrong, in not appearing at the Royal Sessions, because the King had differed from him, and, I believe, very properly in opinion.

Fortune now once more afforded him an honourable opportunity of retiring from the arduous station he had filled, but he again refused to avail himself of it, and accepted the first invitation to return, after having been banished the kingdom. I must not convert a letter into what would be, at best, but a very imperfect and inaccurate history of the Revolution, and posterity, after all, can alone decide on the nature of certain events: vision is at times as much obstructed by our being too near, as it could be by our being too remote from a particular object.

Either Mr. Necker drew down ruin upon France, by giving into dangerous experiments in matters of government, and drawing the attention of the nation to subjects which they were every way unfit to reason about and decide upon, or he was hurried along, as he expresses it, toward a precipice, which was not to be avoided, by a force, which was not to be resisted. It was a misfortune, perhaps, that his mind had been confirmed in its tendency to literary pursuits, by the success of a first attempt; he thought too much, it seems by the event, of his powers of persuasion, and supposed that he could regulate the tumultuous passions of a whole people, by a pathetick, eloquent address, and splendid arguments: he mistook the applauses of the mob, the mad enthusiasm of a wrongheaded frivolous nation, worked upon by designing men, for the effusions of honest patriotism, for the proofs of a virtuous affection to his person, a high sense of his past services, and of his means to save them from the brink of ruin. He had forgotten, no doubt, what he himself relates of their conduct at the funeral of Colbert. Perhaps, however, no man, no philosopher of ancient or modern times, could have resisted the pressing invitations which he received from all parties, to reassume the conduct of publick affairs; from the King, from the National Assembly, and from the people at large: and yet, how short-lived were his influence and popularity! It was to no purpose that he interposed in behalf of the Clergy, now about to be stript of their property, or in favour of those just prerogatives of the crown, which are essentially

necessary to the duration of the most limited monarchy, or that he objected to the forced circulation of paper money; the torrent had taken its course, and bore down everything before it: the nobility and gentry either fled the kingdom or squandered away their rights in motions which were to make them popular, at the expense of their inheritance: religion was insulted, the clergy degraded, and the bonds of society loosened. Having retained his station as long as he could with decency, Mr. Necker at length solicited leave to resign it, and retired, with a melancholy foreboding of the sad scenes which were to follow. He was now treated, in his absence, with the most cruel ingratitude; he was placed upon the list of emigrants, his property sequestered, and a sum of between 80 and £ 90,000 sterling, which he had placed in the Royal Treasury at his last return to office, was withheld from him, nor has it since been restored to his family. He had, fortunately a castle in the Pays de Vaud, and an independent fortune remaining, out of the control of these ferocious legislators, which enabled him to pass the remainder of his life in that useful and honourable retirement, which were worthy of him. I felt a degree of respect in approaching this distinguished statesman, who seemed to me rather a personage of history, than of modern life, and it was increased by his presence. He was full six feet high, large in proportion over the breast and shoulders, with a long visage, regular features, and very fine eyes. The disorder which proved finally fatal to him had already made some progress; it rendered it painful for him to take exercise of any sort, and brought on what appeared a degree of lethargy: he could rouse himself, however, at times, and converse, with great good humour and affability, was always communicative, when referred to, was fond of seeing company, and lived with great hospitality: to the poor he was extensively, but methodically generous, or rather charitable, and was, in the whole management of his private concerns, and at every moment of his life, under the direction of that well-understood economy, which he had once so happily displayed at the head of the French Treasury. With the highest idea of the English and American constitutions, he thought France fitted only for the fate that had befallen it, and alike incapable and unworthy of liberty: we had been better in America, he thought, without Louisiana, had it been possible to have had any other neighbour than the one we were threatened with—as it was, he expected we should, in time, whether peaceably or not, be divided into different fœderations; he smiled when I told him, with exultation, of the ages, during which, our system of liberty would last, nor had I anything to answer, when he observed, that the judiciary branch of our constitution, in which we had happily improved upon our model, had already lost its character of inviolability. I will not take upon myself to appreciate the literary talents of Mr. Necker; they were great, no doubt, and he deserves credit with posterity, for having applied them, on many occasions, with the full weight of his name and reputation, to the promotion of morality: but his style appears, at times, rather turgid than sublime—he thought more than he read, or had not adopted a good model of com-

position, as to language: it is a cumbrous robe of embroidery, with here and there a patch, which he wears upon all occasions, and sometimes even drags after him with pain. I can very well conceive, what contradictory opinions may be entertained of Mr. Necker's merit as a statesman; but his merit in all the various relations of private life, was never yet contested: and when I considered him with attention, observed his demeanour and his language, and reverted in my mind to the character he had established at a very early period of his career, I could not help applying to him what is said of the Emperour Galba: Surely no one would have doubted but that Mr. Necker was fit, in every respect, to be made a Minister of State, had he never filled that office. He had long lived in habits of intimacy with Mr. Gibbon, and spoke of him with great affection, as fond of good-humoured irony in conversation—a trait of character, he thought, peculiar to the English, and as speaking French with the utmost purity, but with an accent, which immediately betrayed him to be an Englishman.

You must remember Madame Curchaud, in Gibbon's Memoirs, and know that she afterwards became Madame Necker. She was the daughter of a clergyman, who had conferred upon her a learned education, and gave lessons at Lausanne, at the time that Gibbon first resided there: her union with Mr. Necker appears to have been the perfection of human happiness; they were, both of them persons of great good sense, as well as of great acquirements, and while his attention was devoted to the publick service, she not only did the honours of his house, for them both, but took upon herself the department of their private affairs.

Had the celebrated and unfortunate Madame Roland been supplied with some similar employment for her active mind, the world might still have possessed that interesting woman, and one unjust and cruel execution the less might have stained the reign of Robespierre. The direction of a splendid family, and the care of a large fortune, however, did not so entirely engross Madame Necker, as not to leave her time for the cultivation of letters: she published one or two works, and accustomed herself to set down, in a sort of common-place book, everything that she heard, or saw, or thought, as the day was passing over. Dr. Johnson, as you may remember, advises Boswell to keep this sort of register of his life, with the certainty of its being useful to himself, and in the hope, that at his death, there would be found some friend who loved him well enough to burn it. I should have been sorry, that Madame Necker's manuscripts had been so inexorably dealt with, but it had been better for her literary reputation, that the care of selecting such parts of them as were most fit for publication, had devolved upon some impartial person. Her five volumes, like those of the Sybil, might have been prized, in proportion to their diminished numbers: all that they contain worth publishing, might certainly have been confined to two: amid an accumulation of uninteresting materials, they contain, however, some original and interesting anecdotes, and many just observations: they have brought me better acquainted with the celebrated Fontenelle, a singular being, who, with knowledge, and talents, and taste, seems to have been devested

of almost every human passion; who was never transported or depressed, was never in a hurry, nor ever interrupted any one in his life. It was impossible that he should be avaricious, but it never occurred to him to give; he did so when the propriety of it was pointed out to him, but forgot it the moment after, as he might have forgotten any other indifferent action of his life, nor did the good actions of others, towards himself, leave any greater impression upon his mind than his own did. The picture I have seen of Madame Necker represents her as fair, with regular features, and with the rather stiff, but yet dignified, appearance of an old-fashioned English Lady of quality. Her conversation, though formal and precise, was such as might have been expected from her education and early habits of life, and from the opportunities which a long residence in Paris had afforded her, of forming connexions with some of the most distinguished literary characters of the age. "With a great desire of attracting company to her house," says Marmontel, "there was yet something constrained in her reception of her guests, nor could she ever acquire the graceful ease and elegant familiarity of a Parisian lady of fashion." She was extensively charitable, and sincerely religious, but severe in her system of domestick discipline, and refined to the extreme in her ideas of female delicacy. She could not bear, for instance, that any one, in speaking of the French, should make use of the singular, and rather coarse appellation, by which that whimsical people chose, at one time, to be distinguished. Her character, such as it has been represented to me by persons who knew her well, that of Mr. Necker, and that of their only daughter, would convince me, if I were yet to be convinced, that there yet remain many mysteries in the arts of education to be explained, notwithstanding all that has been written upon the subject: domestick example not unfrequently produces very different effects from what we might expect, or some one circumstance in the mode of life, the conduct, and conversation of the parent, makes so powerful an impression upon the mind of the child, as to exclude every other sentiment.

Like her parents, Madame de Stael has always been attached to literary pursuits, and to the company and conversation of men of letters; her mind, however, had not been formed in the walks of private life, nor tried by adversity, and her wit, her love of amusement, a flow of spirits, and the pride of knowledge, have borne her away, as the horses of the sun did Phaeton.

It is singular, that the great good sense of her parents should have left them so desirous of a splendid match for their daughter, and that they should have annexed no other indispensable condition to the disposal of her hand in marriage, but high rank, and the profession of the Protestant Religion. As the wife of an ambassadour, Madame de Stael was received at court upon a footing, which she could not have attained to from the claims of her family; she seems never however to have been a favourite there, and I can easily conceive, that the Queen, who had received scarcely any education herself, must have been rather oppressed by such literary brilliancy in another. The society she lived in, too, were all of them, in-

dividually, considered as promoters of the Revolution; they were really so, I believe, and she was delighted to glide gayly along the stream, and to contribute her utmost to the success of a cause, which she supposed congenial to her principles: the atrocious conduct of Robespierre, and some others, rendered her adherence to their opinions no longer possible, and then she retired from the scene, but not till she had made one generous effort in behalf of the Royal family. Mr. Bertrand de Moleville has recorded the anecdote I allude to, though by no means with expressions of partiality; but a candid posterity will give her credit for the ingenuity of the plan, and for having so generously undertaken to risk her life, in the execution of it. She has travelled a great deal, has lived at all times with great hospitality, and has been always ready to do a charitable or a generous and friendly action. She resides generally at her castle of Copet, and would willingly, I believe, diversify her life, with now and then a visit to the capital, but Buonaparte has continued, as Emperour, the restriction he had imposed upon her when First Consul, of not approaching nearer than sixty miles to Paris. He fears her, perhaps, as Mazarin used to dread the Duchess de C——— and the Princess Palatine, who gave him more trouble and more uneasiness, he declared, by their cabals at court, than the Prince of Condè could at the head of an army, in the field: or perhaps, he dislikes, that any one, not within the pale of the imperial family, should attract universal attention so near the residence of his sacred person. He is even said to have felt disagreeably, at the praises so lavishly bestowed upon Madame Recamier in his presence, and to have made that lady experience the proofs of his displeasure. You will think it impossible, that such little passions should find a place in the bosom of so great a man; but you may remember that the authour of The Vicar of Wakefield was mortified that any one should not think him a pretty fellow, or should suppose that he could not throw a pike as well as one of the Fantocini was made to do, and that Voltaire, in all the blaze of literary glory, and in the bosom of Philosophy, and of Friendship, at Cirey, was seen to sicken with jealousy, when the conversation of a numerous circle in which he lived, happened to be engaged, for a day or two, with the story, and the sufferings, of a wretch, who had been broken upon the wheel at Paris.

At all events, and whatever the cause may have been, the fact is, that Mde de S. is in a state of continued exile from Paris, a circumstance which will, probably, be of no disservice to her with posterity, and which, when I reflect upon her indiscriminate hospitality, and upon that unbounded flow of conversation she delights in, may, probably, I think, preserve her from being enveloped in some real or imaginary conspiracy against the government.

The first time I saw this celebrated lady, was in her castle of Copet, and when her mind was as yet strongly impressed with the loss of her father, of whom she never speaks, but in terms of the highest affection and veneration: she was surrounded, as usual, with a company of men, who hung upon all she said. By degrees, her natural cheerfulness prevailed, and, placing herself very much at her ease, with her feet resting upon an

opposite chair, she ran on in a flow of lively conversation. She speaks, I think, even better than she writes, and is never at a loss for the happiest expressions, colouring every thing after a manner peculiar to herself, and deviating, at times, into anecdotes and descriptions, which might offend your chaster ears on the other side of the Atlantick. Her person is of the middle size: her features are not all of them good, and her complexion is bad, but she has a certain roundness and amplitude of form, much admired and aspired to in this country, with a good-natured, lively countenance, and very fine eyes.

The writings of Madame de S. bespeak an ardent imagination, a warm heart, and a considerable fund of various literature: she writes, in general, from accurate observation, or where her means of information fail, she guesses more happily than most people. Her principal work is Delphine, which you may have seen in an English translation. It was difficult for me to overcome the repugnance I have to all novels, which end unfortunately; I have read it, however, and can recommend it to you, who are the mother of a family. The moral is a good one, for we are to suppose, the authour meant to establish it as a maxim, that no woman ought to think herself independent of the received opinions and prejudices of society; Delphine, who is under no such control, though never deviating, in fact, from the paths of virtue, is rendered miserable with a thousand good qualities. It is remarkable, at the same time, that those of the characters which are represented as more under the government of reason and religion, attract very little of our sympathy and regard, so that we are led to prefer Delphine, with all her irregularities, and if that be generally the case, one may assert, that the effect of this popular novel is at variance with the ostensible moral. Such a genius as that of the authour of Delphine, is not calculated, as you may suppose, to lie still long, or enjoy more than a momentary repose, and the literary world is already in expectation, that she will soon publish the posthumous works of Mr. Necker, and some particulars of his private life. Her intended tour in Italy, next winter, too, will probably furnish her with materials for an interesting work, and particularly so, if she could submit to what she supposes a very inferiour department of literature, and would simply convey to her readers, the impressions made upon her own cultivated mind: but the probability is, that some Italian romance, at best, will be the fruit of all those means and opportunities of information, which high rank and a splendid fortune might so easily procure this somewhat whimsical lady, who, as a writer, prefers fiction to sober truth, and the imaginary crosses and intricacies of an idle love-story, to all the beauties of history, or the interests of courts—there are, as Pope says,

There are whom Heaven has blest with store of wit,
Who want as much again to govern it.

For The Port Folio.

CRITICISM.

Odes from the Norse, &c.

The two last of the translated Odes are from the Welch.

THE TRIUMPHS OF OWEN.*

That tuneful voice, that Eagle eye.
Earl of Carlisle.

Owen's praise demands my song,
Owen swift and Owen strong;

Fairest flow'r of Rodrick's stem;
† Gwyneth's shield, and Britain's gem.
He nor heaps his brooded stores,
Nor on all profusely pours;
Lord of every regal art,
Lib'ral hand and open heart.

Big with hosts of mighty name,
Squadrons three against him came;
This the force of Erin hiding,
Side by side as proudly riding,
On her shadow, long and gay,
‡ Lochlin plows the watery way:
There the Norman sails, afar,
Catch the winds, and join the war:
Black and huge, along they sweep;
Burdens of the angry deep.

Dauntless, on his native sands,
§ The dragon son of Mona stands;
In glitt'ring arms and glory drest,
High he rears his ruby crest.
There the thundering strokes begin,
There the press, and there the din,
Talymafra's rocky shore
Echoing to the battle's roar.
|| Checked by the torrent tide of blood,
Backward Thenai rolls his flood;
While heaped his master's feet around,
Prostrate warriours gnaw the ground.
Where his glowing eyeballs turn,
Thousand banners round him burn.
Where he points his purple spear,
Hasty, hasty Rout is there,
Marking, with indignant eye,
Fear to stop, and Shame to fly.
There Confusion, Terrour's child,
Conflict fierce, and Ruin wild,
Agony, that pants for breath,
Despair, and honourable Death.

Mr. Gray entitles this Ode, in his own edition, a *Fragment;* but, from the prose version of Mr. Evans, which, says Mr. Mason, I shall here insert, it will appear, that nothing is omitted, except a single hyperbole, at the end, which I print in Italicks:

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* From Mr. Evans's *Specimens of the Welch Poetry, London*, 1764; 4to, Owen succeeded his father, Griffin; in the principality of North Wales, A. D. 1120. This battle was fought near forty years afterwards. *Gray.*

† North Wales: ‡ Denmark.

§ The Red Dragon is the device of Cadwallader, which all his descendants bore on their banners.

|| This, and the three following lines, are not in the former editions, but are now added from the authour's MS. *Mason.*

PANEGYRICK

Upon Owain Gwynedd, *Prince of North Wales*, by Gualchmai, *the son of Melir, in the year* 1157.*

1. I will extol the generous hero, descended from the race of Roderick, the bulwark of his country; a prince eminent for his good qualities, the glory of Britain—Owen the brave, and expert in arms, a prince that neither hoardeth nor coveteth riches.

2. Three fleets arrived, vessels of the main; three powerful fleets of the first rate, furiously to attack on the sudden; one from Jwerddon,† the other full of well-armed Lochlymians,‡ making a grand appearance on the floods, the third from the transmarine Normans, which was attended with an immense, though successless toil.

3. The Dragon of Mona's Sons was so brave in action that there was a great tumult on their furious attack, and before the Prince himself there was vast confusion, havock, conflict, honourable death, bloody battle, horrible consternation, and upon Tal Malva a thousand banners; there was an outrageous carnage, and the rage of spears, and hasty signs of violent indignation. Blood raised the tide of the Menai, and the crimson of human gore stained the brine. There were glittering cuirasses, and the agony of gashing wounds, and the mangled warriours, prostrate before the chief, distinguished by his crimson lance. Llocgria was put into confusion,

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* See Evans's Specimens of Welch Poetry, p. 25, and for the original Welch, p. 127.

† Ireland. ‡ Danes and Normans. (*Norwegians?*)

the contest and confusion was great; *and the glory of our Prince's wide-wasting sword shall be celebrated in a hundred languages, to give him merited praise.*

The death of Hoel.*

Had I but the torrent's might,
With headlong rage and wild affright,
Upon Deira's squadrons hurled,
To rush and sweep them from the world!

Too, too secure, in youthful pride,
By them, my friend, my Hoel died;
Great Cian's son! of Madoc old
He asked no heaps of hoarded gold;
Alone in Nature's wealth arrayed,
He asked and had the lovely maid.

To Cattraeth's vale, in glittering row,
Twice two hundred warriours go;
Every warriour's manly neck
Chains of regal honour deck,
Wreathed in many a golden link:
From the golden cup they drink
Nectar that the bees produce,
Or the grape's ecstatick juice.
Flushed with mirth and hope, they burn,
But none from Cattraeth's vale return
Save Aeron brave and Conan strong
(Bursting from the bloody throng)
And I, the meanest of them all,
That live to weep and sing their fall!

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* Of Aneurim, styled the Monarch of the Bards. He flourished about the time of Taliessin, A. D. 570. This Ode is extracted from the *Gododin* (See Mr. Evans's *Specimens*, p. 71, and 93, and now first published. *Gray.*

From the extract of *Gododin*, which Mr. Evans has given us, in his *Dissertatio de Bardis*, in the beforementioned book, I shall here transcribe those particular passages which Mr. Gray selected for imitation in this Ode.

1. Si mihi liceret vindictam in Deirorum populum ferre,
Eque ac diluvium omnes una strage prostratum,

2. Amicum enim amisi incautus,
Qui in resistendo firmus erat.
Non petiit, magnanimus, dotem a socero
Filius Ciani ex strenuo Gwyngwn ortus.

3. Viri ibant ad Cattraeth, et fuere insignes,
Vinum et mulsum ex aureis poculis erat eorum potus.
Trecenti et sexaginta tres aureis torquibus insigniti erant;
Ex iis autem, qui nimio potu madidi ad bellum properabant,
Non evasere nisi tres, qui sibi gladiis viam muniebant:
Scilicet, bellator de Aeron, et Conanus Dacarawd,
Et egomet ipse (scilicet Bardus Aneurinus) sanguine rubens:
Aliter ad hoc carmen compigendum non superstes fuissem.

'Whoever,' says Mr. Mason, 'compares Mr. Gray's poetical versions of these four lyrical pieces, with the literal translations, which I have here inserted, will, I am persuaded, be convinced, that nothing of the kind was ever executed with more fire, and at the same time, with more judgment. He keeps up, through them all, the wild romantick spirit of his originals; elevates them by some well-chosen epithet or image, where they flag, yet in such a manner as is perfectly congruous with the general idea of the poems; and if either, varies or omits any of the original thoughts, they are only of that kind, which, according to our modern sentiments, would appear vulgar or ludicrous; two instances of this kind, occur in the latter part of this last Ode. How well has he turned the idea of the fourth line, *Ex iis qui nimium potu madidi*, and the conclusion, *Aliter hoc carmen compigendum*, &c., the former of which is ridiculous, the latter insipid.' Mr. Wakefield, as we have seen, speaks in equal terms of commendation.

In closing these illustrations, it may be acceptable to subjoin two fragments of the same kind, preserved by Mr. Mason.

'I find, amongst Mr. Gray's papers, a few more lines, taken from other parts of the *Gododin*, which I shall here add with their respective Latin versions. They may serve to show succeeding poets the manner in which the spirit of

these ancient predecessours in the art may be best transfused into a modern imitation of them:

Have you seen the tusky Boar,
Or the Bull, with sullen roar,
On surrounding foes advance?
So bore Caradoc his lance.

Quando ad bellum properabat Caradocus,
Filius apri silvestris qui truncando mutilavit hostes,
Taurus aciei in pugnæ conflictu,
Is lignum (*i. e.* hastam) ex manu contorsit.

Conan's name, my lay, rehearse,
Build to him the lofty verse,
Sacred tribute of the bard,
Verse, the Hero's sole reward.
As the flame's devouring force,
As the whirlwind in its course,
As the thunder's fiery stroke,
Glancing on the shivered oak,
Did the sword of Conan mow
The crimson harvest of the foe.

Debitus est tibi cantus qui honorem assecutus es maximum,
Qui eras instar ignis, tonitrui tempestatis
Viribus eximie eques bellicose, Rhudd Fedel, bellum meditaris.

For The Port Folio.

MR. OLDSCHOOL,

In the sixth number of The Port Folio, an Ode has appeared, signed Carlos, and designated as the third of Hafiz. I am led to believe from this, that it is a versification of the third ode of the collection of ten, published some time since in your Miscellany, under the head of "A Treatise on Oriental Poetry."

When a writer attempts to clothe the child of another's fancy in a new dress, whether the drapery be more magnificent or less beautiful, he should always strenuously endeavour to preserve the form of the unoffending bantling, and neither suffer its delicate body to be straitened and compressed, nor to appear distended by superfluities.

Carlos has, unfortunately, in some places, not understood, or if he did understand, has not expressed the full force and meaning of his authour, and in others has added what can only be the offspring of his own imagination.

In pointing out the predominant faults of which Carlos has been guilty, I shall have recourse to another version of the same ode, which appeared in the sixteenth number of the fifth volume of The Port Folio, signed S., and which, I may venture to assert, expresses the obvious meaning of the authour, in some degree more clearly than that of Carlos, now under consideration.

Carlos begins:

Boy, quick bring the goblets and fill them with wine,
With sparkling wine till no more they will hold.

Here we are obliged to break through all propriety, in pronunciation, and read *spark-el-ing*, to help out the measure of the line; when immediately follows a glaring tautology: "*Fill* them with wine, till they will *hold no more*. And then, my friends, Carlos should add, Empty them till there is nothing in them.

For Love finds relief in the tears of the vine.

Hafiz certainly meant, that the pangs of love were relieved by the juice of the grape; but Carlos tells us that the tear of the vine (I suppose he means the sap) is the same as the juice of the fruit which depends from its branches—an important secret, truly.

Tis wine heals the hearts of the young and the old.

Hafiz says, Wine cures the maladies of young and old. Now, from the above line, the plain inference to be drawn, is this, "The hearts of young and old *always* want a

healing balm, or else, wine cures the heart, without removing the malady. This is a self-evident deduction.

In the second verse, Carlos falls far behind the meaning of his authour—he says,

The wine and the cup are the sun and the moon,
To the arms of the moon, Oh! then, let him retire.

This is tame "to a degree." The Sun is wine: the Moon is a bowl. A bowl can have no arms; it is circular. Besides, as Hafiz writes, the metaphor is evident: The wine and the cup are the sun and the moon, bring the moon to serve as a circle to the sun. And S. appears to have caught his meaning, in the following lines:

Like the bright god of day is glowing wine,
And like the pale-faced orb of night the bowl:
Haste bring the moon, that she may with *us* shine,
And round the sun a splendid circle roll.

In the third verse, Carlos says,

If the rose droops *his* head in the fervour of day,
If *its* cheek *is* all withered and faded its hue.

Here the rose is masculine in one line, and neuter in the next. *Droops* is written for *droop*, and *is* for *be*. Because, the verb, being placed in the subjunctive mood, *should* ought to govern; as,

Should the rose droop, &c.
Should its cheek be, &c.

To me it is inexplicable, why Carlos should so far outrage his authour as to give him a preposterous meaning which never was intended. He continues, speaking of the withered rose:

Dip it deep in the bowl: and enlivened and gay,
Its blushes and colour it soon shall renew.

Hafiz merely says "If the rose wither, bring wine of a rose-colour," certainly meaning that the fragrance of the wine and its ruby colour might well replace the once beautiful but now withered rose. As for the dipping experiment, I believe Hafiz never tried its virtue.

In the fourth verse, Carlos writes

If the nightingale ceases *his* tale to relate,
To the musick of glasses your bosoms expand.

The verb again used incorrectly, —*ceases* for *cease*.

Should the nightingale cease, &c.

"*His* tale to relate." Poor Philomela! Thou art indeed unfortunate. The cruelty of Tereus deprived thee of the power of *relating* thy story; thy ingenuity supplied the want of speech. He, who boasted that his fame would be immortal, vainly thought that he had transmitted thy story to posterity. The poet Ovid transformed thee to a nightingale, and preserved thy sex; succeeding poets have agreed to call thee feminine; but the poet Carlos has transformed thee again, and given thee the sex of thy persecutor. Poor Philomela!

Expand your bosoms to musick, says Carlos; we acknowledge that musick softens the soul and delights the senses, but the question is, are our senses placed in our bosoms, and is the bosom the seat of the soul? This involves a metaphysical discussion, and Carlos appears to have answered the question undesignedly.

With submission, we think that S. has followed his authour with greater precision.

And should the warblings of the nightingale
No more with melody enchant the soul,
Soon let us cease her lost notes to bewail,
And hear the musick of the passing bowl.

Hafiz proceeds with this advice, "Do not afflict thyself with the

alteration of fortune, but be attentive to the harmony of the lute."

Carlos renders this as follows:

Mourn not for a moment the changes of Fate,
But hear the lute ring with a masterly hand.

Fate and Fortune may, perhaps, be considered as synonymous, but a doubt can be suggested. A stringed instrument ringing is a curious phenomenon. The verb *to ring*, is applied to the noise made by any *sonorous* metal; as, for instance, a bell. But Carlos may avail himself of the signification of the word *sonorous*, as applied to any *sounding* instrument.

The verse is thus given by S.

Should Fortune frown, who once appeared thy friend,
And deaf to prayers, refuse thy fervent suit;
Cast every grief aside and then attend
The sound harmonious of the well-strung lute.

Carlos proceeds

I shall kiss my beloved's white breast in my sleep,
Then again let my cup with the loved liquor redden,
To hasten the moment pour freely and deep,
And Hafiz will drink if allowed or forbidden.

Hafiz does not say he will kiss his fair one's white breast, he merely observes, that he will see the countenance of his beloved when he sleeps. Some latitude certainly must be allowed for the imagination of the versifier, and S. has the same thought in the following lines;

When sleep o'ertakes my now half closed eyes,
I'll see my fair one, dream I taste her kiss.
Fill high again, pour, pour the wine I prize,
To haste the moment of expected bliss.

Next follows, in Hafiz, a verse, which is thus rendered by S.:

For each mad act, when frenzy seized my soul,
The surest remedy my friends e'er found,
Was wine; replenish then my thirsty bowl,
Till every sense in rosy wine be drowned.

This is totally omitted by Carlos.

The last verse of the Ode certainly deserves more than the single line which Carlos has added to that above beginning with "I shall kiss, &c."

And Hafiz will drink if allowed or forbidden.

In this line, Carlos comprizes the whole sentiment of the last verse of Hafiz, which S. thus exhibits—

Once more, the sparkling cup fill to the brim,
Heed not the censor or the railing crowd,
Approve or disapprove, alike to him,
Hafiz will drink forbidden or allow'd.

I shall conclude by adverting to some faults in the composition. The rhyme of *vine* to *wine* certainly cannot be allowed. The line "With sparkling wine, *till no more they will hold*," is dull prose, as also is that of "The wine and cup," &c.

Pope says,

"And ten low words oft creep in one dull line."

But what would Pope say to

The wine and the cup are the sun and the moon!

I feel confident that Mr. Old-school will agree with me, when I remark that the measure of which Carlos has made use, is little adapted to the Ode, although it be a drinking Ode.

W. R. S.

VARIETY.

In the rough blast heaves the billow,
In the light air waves the willow;
Every thing of moving kind
VARIES with the veering wind:
What have I to do with thee,
Dull, unjoyous Constancy?

Sombre tale, and satire witty,
Sprightly glee, and doleful ditty,
Measur'd sighs, and roundelay,
Welcome all! but do not stay.
What have I to do with thee,
Dull, unjoyous Constancy?

THE SIMPLETON.

Poor Sam, who 'd been sick, and indeed was sick still,

Complain'd of a pain in his thigh;
He made a great noise, although sore 'gainst his will,
For he thought he was going to die.

The Surgeon was sent for, and shortly he came,
Who told Sam to cease all his pother,
This thigh, said the surgeon, is not at all lame,
Well then, replied Sam 'tis the other.

THE ROSE—*By Mr. Fox.*

The rose, the sweetly blooming rose,
Ere from the tree tis torn,
Is like the charm which beauty shows,
In life's exulting morn.

But ah! how soon its sweets are gone,
How soon it withering dies!
So when the eve of life comes on,
Sweet beauty fades and dies.

Then since the fairest form that's made,
Soon withering we shall find,
Let each possess what NE'ER will fade—
The beauty of the mind.

From The Repertory.

AD VESPERAM.

Cum Sol, discedens, alias citò fertur in oras,
Et portans hominum curas et murmura secum;
Inter et agricolas, cum non labor allus aratri
Longiùs a bovibus fessis præsepia claudit;
Cum pastor pecudesque vagas compellit in unum:
Vespera! tum veniunt tua tempora, nuntia noctis,
Tum tua, tum venium ferme dilucida regna.
Vallibus incipiunt imis, dum montibus altis
Lux simulatque Diem, dum Vox procul hæret in Oeta.—
Excelsoque loco, tenebrosa, per æthera, Diva
Nunc cito descendit, linquens vestigia currus.
Nunc tua regna fugis, valles non sponte relinquens;
Nunc collesque petis; nunc summa cacumina montis.
Siste gradum, tu, blanda Dea, et concede videri;
Siste gradum, nunc longe fugis; e vallibus atris
Discedam, montes Diva occupat umbrifera altos.

L. M. SARGENT.

ELEGY ON MY AULD FIDDLE.

"*Whose Name shall remain in the Song.*"
OSSIAN.

We see that ilk revolving day,
The rarest earthly things decay;
Nor can our best endeavours save,
Them frae the universal grave;
Still some disaster unforeseen
Makes them as they had never been.

See my Auld Fiddle, ance sae good,
That pat me aft in canty mood,
When a' things fail'd, see how decay'd
In broken fragments where she's laid,
In yon dark nook wi' other lumber,
Nae mair my study to encumber;
Of brig and finger-bro'd bereft:
Nae string nor bass nor tenor left,
Her hand broke aff, her wame dung in,
And for to tune her ne'er a pin;
Her back and sides in waefu' case,
Sad vestiges of her disgrace.

Nae mair, alas! on her i'll play
Piano sweet or blithe strathspey;
Nae mair, when dowie woods invade,
Shall she be summon'd to my aid;
Like some auld trophy, she may hing,
A dismal melancholy thing.

What though she was of winsome frame,
And frae the fam'd Cremona came,
Yet that and ilka tender note
Could not retard the drunken sot,
Wha, stane blind, fient a haet he saw,
Crush'd her poor banes against the wa'
A tone pathetick, sadly sweet,
She breath'd beneath his clumsy feet,
And like the swan near death, sae she
Sang mournfu' her ain elegy.

Not Robin Burns, nor that glib chield
Height Hamilton o' Gilbertfield,
Nor royal James, o' wit sae keen,
Nor Allan Ramsay's sel' I ween.
Cou'd hae express'd in verse or prose
The wrath that in my bosom rose,
When I beheld my good auld fiddle
Crush'd like a peat-creel in the middle!
I bann'd, and rais'd my doubl'd loof,
Resolv'd to fell ths graceless coof,
And had we been upon a level,
By ——— he'd got an unco devel;
But pity twin'd my heart about,
And sav'd the donnert dunce's snout.

May minstrels a' the kestral hate
And mock and jeer him air and late,
May his ass-lugs be ever found
Deaf to the harmony of sound,
May fighting cats wi' elritch screams,
And howling dogs disturb his dreams;
May discord deave him night and day,
And corbies sing his fun'ral lay,
While my auld fiddle, though she's lame,
Like chiefs of yore, shall hear her fame.

Ye winged minstrels of the wind,
May ye my silent fiddle find,
And as ye fleet your nightly rounds
Recall, as erst, enchanting sounds;
Such airs, as oft in Selma's hall,
While hung his harp against the wall,
Half viewless forms, as Ossian sings,
Oft swept with airy hand the strings:
Haste, haste! ye tuneful shapes of air,
And to her ruin'd frame repair;
Tune her to sadly pleasing lays,
And wake the notes of other days.

G. TURNBULL.

MR. OLDSCHOOL,

Is not Moore's song beginning

"*When Time who steals our years away,*"

little more than a free translation of the following lines from Ausonius:

"Uxor vivamus quod viximus, et moriamur,
Servantes nomen sumsimus in thalamo;
Nec ferat ulta dies ut commutemur in ævo,
Quin tibi sim juvenis, tuque puelli mihi."

It is true Moore has introduced some pretty ideas not found in the original, and, on the other hand, his fourth verse is almost a literal translation of the last line of the above quotation.

MERRIMENT.

When Woodward first played Sir John Brute, Garrick was induced, from curiosity, or perhaps jealousy, to be present. A few days after, when they met, Woodward asked Garrick how he liked him in the part, adding, "I think I struck out some beauties in it." "I think (said Garrick) that you *struck out all the beauties in it.*"

An Irish gentleman having made a purchace of Gibbon's Rome, 12 vols. in boards, took it into a bookseller's shop so have it most elegantly bound. "Pray, Sir, (inquired the bookseller) what binding would you like best? Would you like to have it bound in Russia?" "Oh, no, no!" replied he, "Russia is too far off; I'd rather have it bound *in Dublin*"

The following curious anagram on Napoleon Bonaparte, not being generally known it is worthy notice

"Bona rapta pone Leno,"

which expresses, even to a letter, "you rascal, lay down the stolen goods."

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.

An Italian Ode, composed lately by Mr. Da Ponte, on the present situation of this country, was so well received in London, that 40,000 copies were sold in less than eight days. Sanazzaro, a poet of the 15th century, received 6000 dollars, as a present from the republick of Venice, for Latin verses, which perhaps were not more elegant than those of Mr. Da Ponte. Had this charming poet met with the good fortune of Sanazzaro, he would not now have been under the necessity of procuring a bare subsistence in the city of New-York, by teaching young children their A, B, C.

LAW INTELLIGENCE.

SHERIFF'S COURT, *Wednesday, April* 17.

LYNE *v.* HAMILTON.

The plaintiff, who is a hosier in Oxford-street had paid his addresses to a Miss Wade, the daughter of a respectable tradesman at Lambeth, and afterwards married her. The defendant had also been a suitor with the same lady, and entertained hopes of succeeding, when he was supplanted by the plaintiff, which circumstance became the ground of animosity between the parties. On several occasions the defendant had openly insulted the plaintiff, but by the interference of friends they appeared to be reconciled; until meeting accidentally during the last autumn, at the Horse and Groom publick-house, near Kingston; the old topick was renewed, and as they had been sacrificing to the Jolly God, the most impassioned language occurred. The defendant, who is described as a muscular man, exercised his horsewhip on the plaintiff, in a most unmerciful manner; struck him a violent blow in the face with his fist, and was only restrained from proceeding to further violence by the servants of the house. After these facts had been proved, the Jury returned a verdict of 20*l. damages.*

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